



## NEWS RELEASE

July 18, 2007

*For immediate release*

*Photos available*

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**What:** Portland Taiko's 2007 Fall Concert, *The Way Home* and *Bamboozled!*  
Children's Matinee

**Who:** Portland Taiko, Asian American Drum Performance Group

**When:** *The Way Home*, Fall Concert, September 21 & 22, 8pm; September 23, 2pm;  
*Bamboozled!* Children's Matinee, September 22, 2pm

**Where:** Newmark Theatre, Portland Center for the Performing Arts, 1111 SW  
Broadway, Portland

**Tickets:** Single tickets \$23.50-25.50

Children's matinee \$11.50 children/students, 17.50 adults

Additional service charges may be applied.

Available July 27 at PCPA Box Office, [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com) or 503-790-ARTS. For discounted group and special Patron Tickets contact Portland Taiko, 503-288-2456 or [www.portlandtaiko.org](http://www.portlandtaiko.org)

**Sponsors:** *The Way Home/Bamboozled!* is funded in part by The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, The Collins Foundation, The Kinsman Foundation, Oregon Arts Commission, and Oregon Cultural Trust. The Oregon Arts Commission, Regional Arts & Culture, Work for Art, and the Mark Spencer Hotel have generously supported Portland Taiko's season.

### **PORTLAND TAIKO'S *THE WAY HOME* GROWS FROM COMMUNITY, FEATURES GUEST ARTIST COLLABORATORS**

Millions have come to these shores seeking to build new lives, overcoming prejudice and hardships, putting down new roots, and finally, finding *The Way Home*.

In a new theatrical production, Portland Taiko weaves spoken word, movement, sets, costumes and lighting with the dynamic rhythms of the big drums to bring to life the search for home and all that comes with it. Inspired by a creative process with local community members, Portland Taiko's drum performance group will be joined onstage by Lawson Inada, Oregon's Poet Laureate, and feature sets by visual artist Valerie Otani and transitional staging and music by composer Byron Au Yong. Portland Taiko's Artistic Co-Directors, Teresa Enrico and Michelle Fujii, are directing the production, which also features new costumes and lighting by Mark LaPierre. Performances are Friday and Saturday, September 21 and 22, at 8pm, and Sunday, September 23 at 2pm, at the Newmark Theatre in downtown Portland. Saturday, September 22 at 2pm PT will perform *Bamboozled!*, a children's matinee version of the full concert that is fun for the whole family, complete with compelling rhythms, storytelling, and audience participation.

Asian American  
Drum Performance

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Inada, Otani and Au Yong have been collaborating with Portland Taiko and each other to engage community members from the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center and the Oregon Vietnamese Cultural Association in helping to create the stories, scenery, and new compositions, plus musical, narrative and movement transitions for *The Way Home*.

Au Yong, Otani , and Inada expressed enthusiasm about working with each other, and added that they are especially energized and inspired by working with the community and the performing group. They are particularly inspired by interaction with the community, and the stories from community members.

The performers and collaborating artists have been working with the sounds, images, memories, and feelings of home evoked by bamboo, an iconic feature in many Asian and Asian American homes and communities. Inada is creating a spoken narrative, which he will also perform, to be used at key moments and transitions throughout the program.

With Otani, the collaborators are exploring ways for the set to be integrated, transformed and “constructed” during the concert, so that it is actively used by the performers, not only to create visuals, but also to transform the stage space, and in the creation of the music and soundscape. Otani is also a performing member of the group.

Au Yong is working on pieces involving bamboo poles: a humorous, rhythmic piece drawing on the familiar sounds of home (coffee makers, doors, etc.), and melodic pieces evoking the many feelings of home and our search to find or make a home.

Lawson Inada is a widely published poet and an emeritus professor of writing at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, where he has taught since 1966. He currently serves as Oregon’s Poet Laureate. Inada is a Sansei (a U.S.-born grandchild of Japanese immigrants). In 1942, his family joined over a hundred thousand other Japanese-Americans in camps in California, Arkansas and Colorado -- an event that profoundly shaped his subsequent work. He was one of the co-editors of the landmark anthology, *Aiiieeee! An Anthology of Asian-American Writers*, and has participated in efforts to recover writing by earlier Japanese American authors. He has published several collections of poetry, including *Before the War* and *Legends from Camp*. He has received two National Endowment of the Arts Poetry Fellowships (1972 and 1985), the American Book Award (1984), the Oregon Governor’s Arts Award (1997), the Oregon Book Award (1997), and the Pushcart Prize (1996) for Poetry. Calling live performance his favorite form of “publishing,” Inada has collaborated with Portland Taiko for past performances.

As an American composer and performer of Chinese heritage, Seattle-based Byron Au Yong crosses cultural and aesthetic terrain. His influences range from musical theatre to sacred ceremonies to action movies. Dedicated to intercultural and multidisciplinary collaboration, Au Yong has created over 50 dramatic works that have been performed in locations ranging from abandoned railroad tracks to concert halls. Au Yong curated the exhibition *A Bridge Home: Music in the Lives of Asian Pacific Americans* for the Wing Luke Asian Museum. He has worked with Canada's premiere Asian percussion ensemble Uzume Taiko.

Valerie Otani is an artist with an extensive portfolio of public art projects for transit stations, parks and community centers that reveal layers of cultural history in everyday places. She created artwork inspired by the historic links between Seattle and Asia for the Weller Street Pedestrian Bridge, has designed stations for three lines of light rail in Portland, and is now working on a park in Phoenix, Arizona. Her “Voices of Remembrance” commemorates the site of the livestock hall where Port-

land's Japanese Americans were imprisoned in 1942. Otani has created set designs for two previous Portland Taiko shows, *ArtExplosion* and *A Place Called Home*.

As the first professional taiko ensemble in the Pacific Northwest and one of a handful of professional groups in North America, Portland Taiko bridges innovative Asian American artistic expression and ancient folk traditions. Since it was formed in 1994, Portland Taiko has reached over 695,000 people through more than 900 community performances, home concerts, school programs, classes and tours and residencies. In recent years, Portland Taiko's unique performances and music have placed it onto a national stage with tours that have taken the group all over the country, from Hawaii to the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C.

Tickets for *The Way Home* are \$23.50 – 25.50. *Bamboozled!* tickets are \$11.50 for children and students and \$17.50 for adults. All tickets are available at the PCPA Box Office, Ticketmaster, or 503-790-ARTS. Additional service charges may be applied. For discounted group and special Patron Tickets contact Portland Taiko 503-288-2456 or [www.portlandtaiko.org](http://www.portlandtaiko.org)

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